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**TWO CHICAGO AREA BUSINESSMEN CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL
HAZARDOUS WASTE STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION**

CHICAGO – Two Chicago area businessmen were indicted for conspiracy to violate federal environmental laws by illegal transporting and storing hazardous wastes, Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, announced today. The defendants, **Mohammed Gheith** and **Vishnu Gor** were charged with violating the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which governs the handling of hazardous waste, in an eight-count indictment that was returned Wednesday a federal grand jury.

Gheith, 69, of Oak Lawn, is the owner, operator and president of William H. Cooper Company in Chicago and was a partner in William H. Cooper, LLC, located in Bedford Park, both of which engaged in packaging industrial cleaners and buying and selling machinery. Gor, 66, of Orland Park, was the owner, operator and president of the former Overdale Corp., in Alsip, and L. Carlton Mertz, in Bedford Park, both of which engaged in the business of blending chemicals to create industrial cleaners, generating caustic and acidic wastes.

Both defendants will be arraigned at a later date in U.S. District Court.

The indictment alleges that Gheith concealed the storage of hazardous waste at the Cooper facilities from others so that he would not have to pay for the removal of hazardous waste by

companies licensed to do so by the state. As part of the conspiracy, Gor allegedly caused hazardous waste to be transported to Gheith's facilities without providing uniform hazardous waste manifests to accompany the shipments, and instead sometimes caused fictitious bills of lading to be created to conceal the transportation of hazardous wastes.

According to the indictment, the defendants illegally stored numerous drums and totes of hazardous wastes at company facilities in Alsip, Bedford Park, and Chicago, beginning as early as August 2003, and illegally transported hazardous wastes between these facilities. In March 2004, the defendants allegedly supervised the transportation of several hundred drums of wastewater and unusable product, some of which contained hazardous waste, from Mertz to the Cooper facility in the 6700 block of West 65th Street. The defendants also allegedly caused the illegal transportation of hazardous wastes from a concealed room at a warehouse in Bedford Park to a vacant parking lot in Chicago in July 2005, the indictment alleges.

If convicted, the charges in the indictment carry maximum penalties ranging from two to five years in prison on each count and a fine of \$250,000.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney April Perry.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation Division and National Enforcement Investigations Center. The Illinois EPA, Bedford Park Police, Chicago Police, Illinois State Police, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Commerce, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement also assisted in the investigation.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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